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of the sixteenth century in a greater comfort and elaboration of domestic life, rendered possible in the case of the middle classes by increasing prosperity. The later pieces of this group show this change clearly in the elaboration of their form and surface decoration. Apart from their archaeological interest, however, they possess marked artistic qualities. Fitness to use and good proportion are the basis of good furniture design. In these as in their vigor of conception the pieces show the roots on which flowered the English cabinet work of the eighteenth century.

M. R. R.

FRENCH BLACK AND WHITE OF THE LAST HALF-CENTURY

IN the last number of the BULLETIN an attempt was made to outline the history of the changes in the several graphic media which were successively fashionable in France during the last century, and, incidentally, to point out the fact that each of the groups of artists which has made a real contribution to the development of art during that time has had to fight its way to acceptance through a "barrage" of hostile criticism. In that note, however, nothing was said about the endeavor or the accomplishment of the several groups or about the general trend of the work of the century.

Well known in this country as is the black and white of the more celebrated etchers of the middle years of the century, what came after is but little known, and when seen is apt to be misunderstood, especially by those who have not followed more or less closely the development of French painting during the period. The comprehension of work by living or but recently deceased Frenchmen seems to be peculiarly difficult, not only on account of its comparative rarity in this country but even more because there is little so thankless or so difficult to think one's way through as the work of one's contemporaries. Were it possible to get a view of it in perspective it would be different, but as it is one is caught and jostled in a crowd so thick and so quickly moving

that one can get only occasional glimpses of faces as they squeeze past, let alone seeing whole figures or becoming familiar with expressions and gaits. One knows that in the crowd there are organizers, the men who determine the direction in which it is ultimately to move, but to pick them out of the crowd, where leader and mere henchman look so much alike, is almost impossible. Moreover, since one can never see any of them whole, it is inevitable that each new glimpse, each new aspect will call for a revision of opinion, and that it is impossible to come to any more than tentative conclusions. The serious observer knows that at any moment the turn of the kaleidoscope may bring before him something which will immediately upset his entire calculation and require the laborious construction of a new formula. Thus until a movement has stopped and been succeeded by another in a new direction, it is impossible to tell either what it is or how far it will go, because in art at least the only clear vision is that around corners.

In view of all this the following article has been prepared—not as a pedagogical explanation but rather as a sort of thinking out loud, informally, and with many hesitations and reserves.

In the first place, it is necessary to consider the great differences between prints by men who habitually work in some graphic medium and those by men who habitually work in multicolored pigments. The specifically graphic artist has a tendency always to become immersed in the particular mechanical problems of his chosen medium. Moreover, working on a small scale and most often expressing himself through a needle point, he frequently finds himself not only involved in what after all is very largely immaterial detail but seeing almost exclusively in terms of a more or less traditional black and white. The painter usually works on what is comparatively speaking a vast scale, he thinks in terms of color and light, volumes, masses and weights, while space relationships and decorative quality are of the greatest importance to him. Being controlled by all

these things as well as by the shape and size of his tools and the nature of his pigment, all of which lie outside the thought and often the experience of the man who works only with a point, the painter's method of drawing is naturally most different from the other's. He has much more to express just because he is necessarily cognizant of so many more things, and that being so he is sure when he happens to work in black and white to produce things which deviate widely from the ac-



LA CONVALESCENTE
BY EDOUARD MANET

cepted canons of professional black and white.

All of this doubtless seems like a sad and verbose truism, but it is most necessary that it should be borne in mind and simply because of an historic fact which has nothing to do with the work under consideration but has much to do with the American attitude toward it. This fact is that the only French prints of the last hundred years with which the American audience has ever become familiar are those by a group of artists who with one exception were primarily etchers rather than painters; the result of which is that in this country the amateur of prints has come to think of

their work as the norm to which prints should conform. The group may be typified by such names as those of Méryon, Jacque, Bracquemond, Daubigny, Lallanne, Legros, Lepère, and Millet. Millet's task was a painter's, his prints but the slightest episode in his career. The other men were frankly professional makers of prints, an occupation which consumed the greater part of their time as it did of their thought. Reference back to their work for standards or criteria, therefore, inevitably results in misconception and failure to understand the work of men who thought along other lines and whose preoccupations were unknown to them.

Taking it for granted therefore that there is no difficulty in understanding the work of the group which has been indicated, no further reference to it will be made in this article, which will be directed to the performance in black and white of the more noteworthy painters of the second half of the century last past. For purposes of clarity they will be spoken of separately, although to do so will of necessity result in giving a somewhat false view of the situation, for they all greatly influenced each other and had many traits in common which cannot be dwelt upon in an attempt to point out their specific idiosyncrasies.

Manet, who was rather a single-minded person and not particularly afflicted with either curiosity or inquisitiveness, displayed a detachment which accorded delightfully with his quite carefully booted and gloved dandyism of dress. He saw everything broadly and simply as befitted a temperament that habitually found ease in splotches of tone, and as often as possible evaded the discomfort and concentration required to focus attention upon a line. Although in his later years an "impressionist" that formula so far as he was concerned was merely a pleasant technical method, his adherence to it being that of a man who was loyal to his friends rather than of one who himself felt any particular conviction about it. From much work in paint he learned that for many purposes correct placing was equally as important as minute or finikin drawing of shapes—that a spot of the right tone in the right

place told just as keenly, though in another way, as patient delineation of detail. Thus in such a print as the well-known and not uncommon *La Convalescente* the figure is drawn in the most sketchy manner, the head slightly indicated, the arm and hand counting as but little more than the notation of a gesture, the picture being bound together and made into a whole by the broad opposition of the black and white surfaces. Tidy laying of lines was the last thing that Manet was thinking about, for either that or minute rendering

somehow when we think of it we are extremely grateful to Manet for the instinctive gentlemanliness and reserve which are responsible for its actual charm.

Degas, whose name is so often in loose conversation joined with that of Manet, is another similar case of a painter who made prints. He was well-to-do, and he collected. In his youth he made marvelous copies of drawings by the primitives. In his middle years he bought Japanese color prints and the lithographs of Daumier and Gavarni. After his death his



THE GOOSE GIRL BY CAMILLE PISSARRO

of detail would inevitably have destroyed the broad luminosity for which he was striving. Each of the crucial lines, however, is drawn with a freedom and assurance and, even more, with a rightness, which had he not named the plate would have prevented it from receiving any name other than that which it bears. The pallor of the sick woman, the weight of her body propped up in the pillows, and the tired gentleness of her dainty gesture could not have been more perfectly realized. Every thing which makes a Manet painting worth while is to be found in this little print, since for even his color he has succeeded in finding the precise black and white analogue. What such another as Degas with his cruel inquisitiveness would have made of the subject is apparent, and

heirs sold his collection of drawings and paintings, among them notable things by such diverse men as Ingres and Gauguin. He was absorbed in the study of composition, especially that of line, and of color, to which he added an uncanny and often caustically witty interest in the delineation of character. Such a portrait as the early etching of his friend Tourny is comparable in its simplicity of attack to those etched by Van Dyck, but is marked by an uncompromising directness of thought that lay far beyond the mental capacity of the seventeenth-century artist. His drawings of Manet and Duranty show this same highly trained athletic vision, as cold and incisive as the traditional surgeon's knife—in the one case expressing its results through sharp, delicate lead pencil

lines, in the other through the use of chalk boldly applied with the utter directness which comes only from drastic and highly intellectual elimination of all non-essentials. In such a print as the etched *Sortie du Bain* we again find this acid and ruthless dispensing with every thing that did not tend immediately to the end in view, complicated, however, by the fact that the artist was placing the moving figure in an envelope of light. The mass and movement of the body are given, and much of its character, but beyond that little of its definite form is discernible—had it been drawn as was any of the portraits, the effect of the light would have been destroyed.

As typical a work by the mature Degas as any of his largest paintings is the marvelous lithograph of Mlle. Bécot aux Ambassadeurs. It is night at the well-known open-air theatre in the Bois. The light from the globes and the *becs de gaz* is absorbed by the background of foliage and sky except where it falls upon the long upright mouldings and the so curiously alive figure of the little songstress. Overhead a chandelier, stretching to the right across the blackness of the night a row of globes, at the right a group of them partly hidden by the hanging branches of a tree, and above it a large round globe on a high standard. Against the brightly illuminated skirt of the *diseuse* a bullet head is sharply and blackly indicated. As a composition, an arrangement of ordinary things in a fine design, it can hold its own with anything that ever came out of Japan, but the wonder of this is entirely eclipsed by the marvel of the little woman. Head cocked saucily forward, her arms outstretched in gaiety, each finger counting in the gesture, the slender figure is alive and nervous as only that of the café singer in May along the Bois. Nowhere can one say definitely what the form is, because the form is revealed only through shifting light, but it has an individualization of character, a solidity and weight, and especially a movement, that have never been equaled in the black and white work of any other artist of modern times, and a gaiety which is infectious and all its own. Above all, it is the scene from every-day city life, and to

one who stops to think what it means to extract fresh, keen pictorial excitement from the normal round of the citizen's day little more need be said.

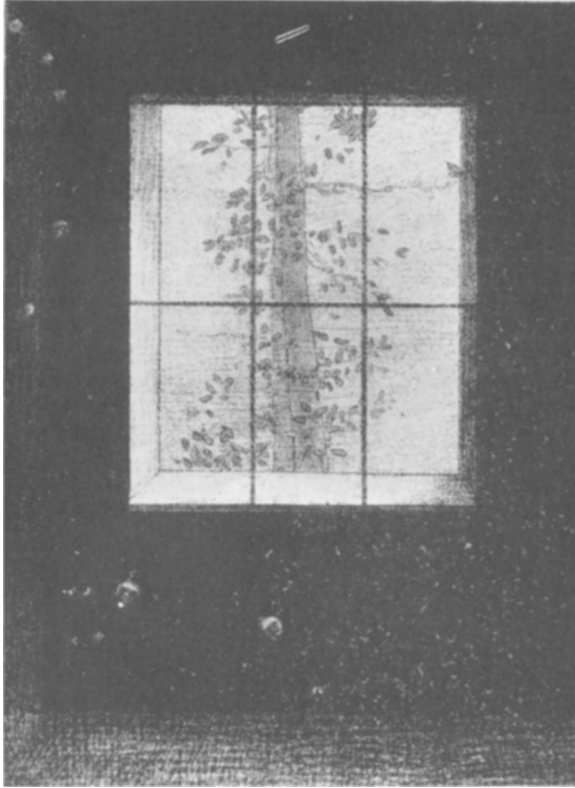
As neither Manet nor Degas can be strictly placed with the Impressionists and as Monet for practical purposes did no black and white, their only representative in the exhibition is Pissarro. Born in Martinique of Jewish parents, and endowed with a gentle and pensive temperament, he brought to the practice of his art a certain quiet intellectual curiosity and a scientific interest in some of its problems which led to his becoming the originator of pointillisme, although the particular theory of practice upon which it was based was principally developed by such men as Seurat and Signac. It is obviously impossible here to attempt any explanation of the theories of light and color that lay at the bottom of the revolutions in practice brought about by either the Impressionists or the Neo-Impressionists, nor is it necessary since they had little or no effect upon black and white. In the course of Pissarro's observations, however, he became deeply impressed with the fact that the eye was rarely if ever sharply focused, and that when it was it was only on some small minute point, the rest of the field of vision being in a more or less blurred state. This discovery—which doubtless had been made by many other men before him—unlike the special physical laws of color, did have an immediate effect upon Pissarro's work both as etcher and as lithographer. After the prints of such men as Méryon or Millet in which the record was that of an eye which travels slowly and with sharp focus over every detail of the field of vision, a record, that is, of patient exploration involving long expenditure of time and study on the part of the beholder as well as of the creator of the work of art, the etchings of Pissarro are odd in their blurriness, in their lack of sharp definition of the kind only obtainable by stopping and sharply focusing. But as against this there is to be set the fact that the picture presented by one of them is that actually seen by any one surveying a real landscape without fixing his eyes. Here again a

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great triumph was achieved in black and white, for Pissarro succeeded in finding an adequate monochromatic rendering of things which offhand one would think possible only in full color. A comparison of his painting of a Market Place in the exhibition of Impressionist paintings with his etching of a somewhat similar subject in the

seek for a specifically "impressionist" piece of black and white, this would doubtless serve as well as any other.

Oddly enough, Seurat, the most famous of the Neo-Impressionists, who is usually and principally associated with the pointillisme which from one point of view was the logical outcome of the impressionist theory of



ONE OF THE SONGES
BY ODILON REDON

print galleries shows the identical qualities throughout, and in passing from one to the other the visitor is hardly aware of the fact that one of them is in monochrome and the other in full color. His little print of the Goose Girl is another example. When looked at myopically it is scrawny and discomforting, but when seen from the proper distance it is remarkable for the intangible sense of light and movement with which it is suffused. Were one to

color, was also one of the first of the younger men in whose work may be seen the reaction of feeling against impressionism. This aspect of his work while clearly visible in his canvas of *La Grande Jatte* in the exhibition of paintings is possibly more clearly to be seen in his two black and white drawings in the print galleries because it is there dissociated from his manner of applying color. The principal failure of the Impressionists had been a certain

snap-shot attitude toward nature, for they were so absorbed in their grappling with color, light, and atmospheric effect that they somewhat neglected some other things which go into picture making and which are just as important. Seurat, who unfortunately died young leaving very little work behind him, approached his picture making in anything but this snap-shot manner. His pictures are planned and worked out from the point of view of design in the most careful and painstaking manner, and, in addition to his care for design, he was keen to render the volumes and the masses of the objects he delineated. There is something architectonic about his work which is wholly lacking in that of the Impressionists, which in comparison appears muscularly wanting.

It is perhaps proper at this point to refer to the work of two men who were singularly little thought of during their lifetimes, but whose work has exercised great influence over the younger generation. These are Paul Cézanne and Odilon Redon. Cézanne is today so much talked of and written about that he appears by many to be regarded as the major prophet of one wing of the contemporary movement. He seems to have done very little black and white and is represented in the exhibition of prints and drawings by several lovely watercolors and three impressive colored lithographs, which to all intents and purposes are reproductions of watercolors. Any discussion of his work in this article, which is especially directed to the black and white in the exhibition, would therefore be out of place.

Redon was a musician, who in the beginning drew only for his own pleasure, and turned to lithography on the suggestion of Fantin-Latour. Born in 1840, he was thus distinctly a member of the older group of men, although most often referred to with the younger contemporaries. A dreamer of strange dreams, on occasion of haunting loveliness, he succeeded in getting more from the lithographic medium than any one since the men of the romantic period. He rarely drew anything in a reportorial manner, although the two peculiarly fine lithographs of trees show his acute power

of observation and draughtsmanship. A number of his prints from the two series known under the respective titles of *La Maison Hantée* and *Songes* are more typical of his work and his attitude toward life. One shows the bottom of a stair-well, part of the moulding of a door, a stair-rail, and several steps, illuminated by some flickering light. The beautiful play of the lights and deep shadows and the unaffected simplicity of the setting, which is almost bald in its bareness, combine to give an effect which is literally that of the haunted house—as one looks at it one has the sense of having experienced something odd and not easily to be explained, and there is just a little of the shiver in one's reaction. Another portrays a window, through the crossed sashes of which may be seen the exquisitely traced branches of a tree. It is twilight, not strong enough to illuminate the room in which one is, and nothing moves save several bubbles which float silently, iridescently, against the deep impenetrable shadows of the wall and floor. No living being is to be seen and all is quiet, still. There is no parade of learning, no problem of naturalistic draughtsmanship, none of the things in fact which have played the most prominent part in the nineteenth-century development. The picture stands apart from the whole busy current—its message one to that so precious twilight period of consciousness when feeling takes the place of thought, and mind and body seem momentarily to be as one. Poetry has driven out science and realities are tawdry.

In getting some of his effects Redon resorted to distortion—a subject which will have to be taken up a little later.

With Gauguin we come to a different type of mind. Born in Valparaiso, with a strong admixture of Spanish-American blood in his veins, he had been educated in France, where he spent a great part of his life in a stock broker's office from which he carried with him to the end of his days the peculiarly neat handwriting typical of the French clerk. He began painting at night and in his off hours, and after a while broke away entirely. At one place and another in France he painted and starved

and was intimate with poor demented Vincent van Gogh. Finally in desperation he sold all his pictures at auction and took himself to the South Seas with a supply of paints and canvas. It was as though there had been some nostalgia for the barbaric—some atavism come down from his conquistador ancestors—and though he found neither peace nor happiness out there he did find colors and shapes which worked him up into what was frequently a far too febrile excitement. It is to the work he did in Tahiti and the Marquesas

and all the rest of it, and any one who should say that it was untrue, or out of drawing, or that its color was false, would be laughed out of face immediately by the assembled crowd as a poor kind of person, possibly all right as a human calculating machine but utterly devoid of all sensibility and imagination. Yet the same people who would most quickly laugh at one who should say, "But, you know, bones can't change into coral, and they are white not red," are seemingly the very first to raise the cry against a painter who



WOODCUT BY PAUL GAUGUIN

that he owes most of his popular celebrity, but in reality it differed remarkably little from what he had done in France. The hand, the eye, and the brain remained exactly the same—simply the public has been willing to accept his patterns of things it did not know, where it had been unwilling to take an interest in his statements concerning things it was familiar with. The simple fact is that he was primarily a decorator and that the public, habituated to naturalistic versions, was unable to follow him.

In literature seemingly a man may be as fantastic as he pleases and may let his mind run loose without having people cry out about his falsity. From childhood we have been educated to the beauty of

exercises the same liberty that the poet constantly and with universal approval indulges in.

In all probability when the dust and the shouting shall have subsided Gauguin will be seen to have been rather a frank and simple-minded person who knit serious patterns and had neither a conscious theory nor any particular intellectual background. Every generation has its Gauguins, and however much fuss is made about them time has its inevitable revenges, for whatever their contemporaries may think of them their successors looking at them in perspective rarely if ever are able to discern that they were particularly queer or even that they were so very different from the other men of their period.

Gauguin thus was a decorator, a man who letting his mind run wove patterns,

Full fathom five thy father lies,
Of his bones are coral made,

some of them as patterns foolish, some most magnificent. It is possible even that in the South Seas he may have drawn and colored most accurately, but of that we in the heart of a modern white civilization and living in the temperate zone are unable to judge—and so whether true or false we have to approach his Tahitian pictures as fairy tales. From this point of view, then, his work must be seen, and once the fact has been admitted it is possible to become aware of his performance in its true light.

His prints are exactly like his paintings, essentially the work of a decorator and colorist, and marvelously his woodcuts, although in black and white, seem to have even more of color than his paintings. His woodcuts, or at least those with which the writer is familiar, are planned as great mural paintings might be planned, their spaces are so important. This is something that has almost vanished from the modern print, and to find it in the old prints one must needs go back to the Italian *chiaroscuro* of the second quarter of the sixteenth century. The treatment of forms and the broad ignoring of minor and

decoratively unessential detail is something which a world habitually accustomed to the fine and gossamer play of the etching needle finds unusual and vaguely disquieting—but after all why should one ask that a woodcut look like an etching, or even for that matter like the wood engravings done under a microscope and over a photographic basis? Broad spaces of black, solid heavy blacks of a kind so difficult to print on an ordinary press that it has rarely been essayed, are relieved by flashes of white, flame-like in their effect, and both are welded together by half-tints, sometimes scratched in in lines made with a point or an abrasive, at others obtained by simply lowering the flat surface of the block. In the making of these blocks “sculpsit” meant literally what it says, and not the mere digging of lines in a flat plane. Of all the woodcuts ever made none are more natural, none more simply grown out of the nature of the medium and the tool, and none have had more of that curious richness of color which seems possible only in black and white.

W. M. I., JR.

(*To be continued in the August BULLETIN*)

NOTES

WASHINGTON'S FLAG. The Museum is placing on view in its armor gallery (H 7) an interesting flag which has recently been lent by the City of New York. This was carried at the inauguration of George Washington as First President of the United States as the regimental colors of the Second Regiment, First Brigade, N. Y. State Artillery. This national relic, it appears, came lately into the hands of the Art Commission of the City of New York, among the memorabilia in City Hall, together with documents relating to it: these showed that it had been in the possession of the City of New York since 1821, when with appropriate military ceremonies it had been placed in the care of the fathers of our city. It was then a beautiful affair, of garnet silk bearing the crest of the state, with panoply and device

—as a careful restoration shows us. But today it is tattered and fragmentary. None the less it touched the patriotic emotions of many people when it was lately returned to City Hall after its short sojourn at Governor's Island, where it had been framed by the banner expert, Chaplain E. B. Smith. Its return, in fact, on May 26, 1921, its centennial anniversary as the property of New York, was the occasion of an important civic ceremony. In front of the City Hall were ranked officers of the Army and the Navy, delegates of patriotic societies, the highest city officials, and several thousand citizens, who saw United States troops march by as its guard of honor, the banner itself borne upon a gun-carriage, and who listened with keen attention to the speakers, including the Mayor and the President of the Museum as Chairman of the Art Commission.